ATLAS COMICS
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NO. 2
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TIGER-MAN
TM
WITH MANLIKE CUNNING--
--WITH BESTIAL FURY--
--HE STALKS THE NIGHT!

TIGER-MAN

STALKER in a CONCRETE JUNGLE!

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EEEEEEEEEEEE

HEY, UH, DON'TCHA THINK WE'D BETTER GET GOING? I MEAN, WITH THAT ALARM SCREAMIN' AND ALL--
SECURITY'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE!
LET 'EM COME, EDDIE!
YEAH-- DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE AFRAID OF SOME CRUMMY COPS!

EEEEEE

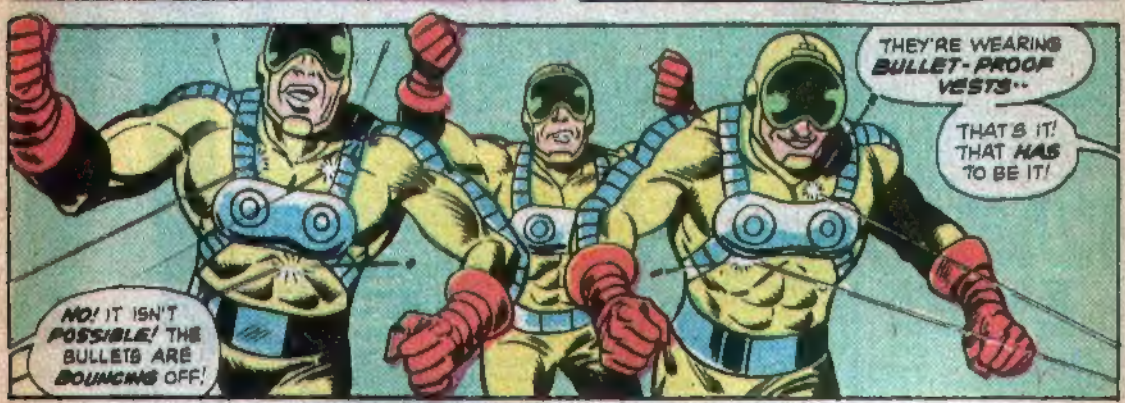
AFRAID? NO, I'M NOT AFRAID! I'M NOT!
IT'S JUST--
THERE'S SOMETHING SPOOKY ABOUT THE CITY TONIGHT-- DON'T KNOW WHAT--

JUST-- SOMETHING SPOOKY!
AH, YOU'RE NUTS, EDDIE... PLAIN NUTS.
ALL THE SAME-- I THINK WE SHOULD PACK UP THE MONEY AND SPLIT!

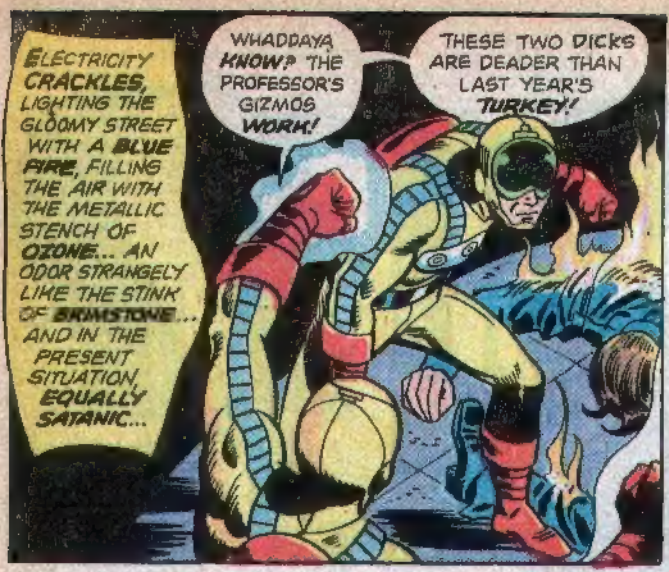
HAVE IT YOUR WAY, PANIC-BOY.
BRREEEE
C'MON, WE'VE GOT ALL WE-- HEY! MAYBE WE DID TAKE TOO LONG!
THE SECURITY GUARDS!

HOLD IT! SECURITY!
NOW'S OUR CHANCE TO SEE IF THESE GIZMOS WORK!
WHEN I GIVE THE WORD--

RUSH 'EM!
BANG!
POW!
HALT! OR WE'LL SHOOT!
OKAY, PALS--WE WARNED YOU! FIRE, BILL-- FIRE!

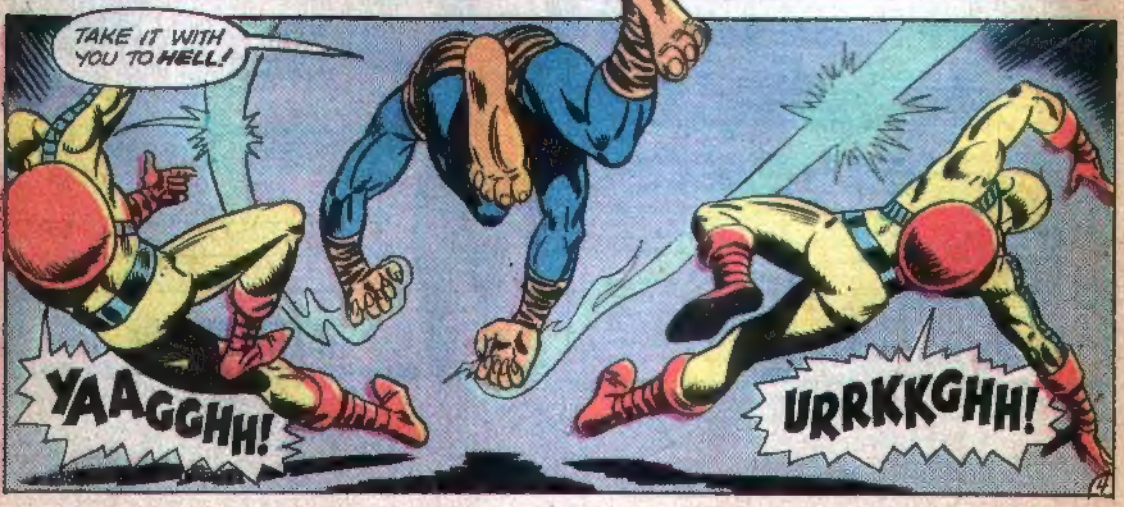

THEY'RE WEARING BULLET-PROOF VESTS--
THAT'S IT! THAT HAS TO BE IT!
NO! IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! THE BULLETS ARE BOUNCING OFF!

COPPER, YOU AIN'T SEEN NUTHIN'!
YAAHHH!
SPRRAZZ!
UNNHH!
GET A LOAD OF THIS!


ELECTRICITY CRACKLES, LIGHTING THE GLOOMY STREET WITH A BLUE FIRE, FILLING THE AIR WITH THE METALLIC STENCH OF OZONE... AN ODOR STRANGELY LIKE THE STINK OF BRIMSTONE... AND IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, EQUALLY SATANIC...
WHADDAYA KNOW? THE PROFESSOR'S GIZMOS WORK!
THESE TWO DICKS ARE DEADER THAN LAST YEAR'S TURKEY!

YOU SHOULD CONGRATULATE YOURSELVES, GENTLEMEN...
HUH?

OTHER MEN WOULD HAVE BEEN SATISFIED WITH THE MONEY-- BUT YOU HAVE PROVEN YOURSELVES BEYOND OTHER MEN...
YOU'RE SATISFIED ONLY WITH--MURDER!
WHAT IS THIS-- HALLOWEEN? WHO THE--
THE NAME IS TIGER-MAN! REMEMBER IT WELL, FRIEND!


TAKE IT WITH YOU TO HELL!
YAAGGHH!
URRKKGHH!

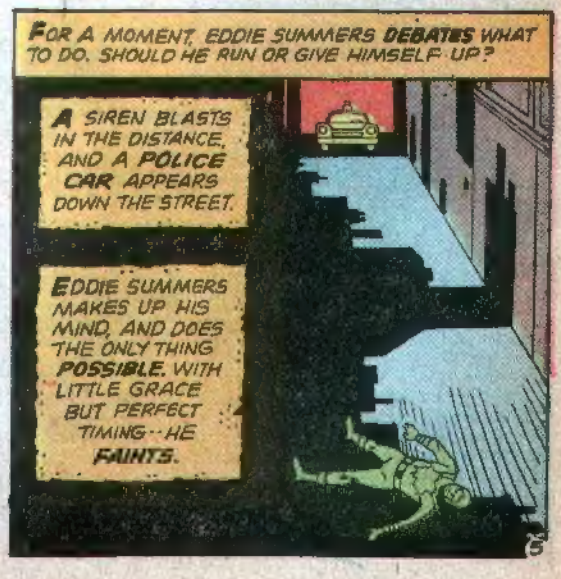
CLAWS FLASH IN THE DARKNESS, CATCHING A STRAY BEAM OF MOONLIGHT-- AND GLINTING LIKE MOLTEN SILVER.
AFTER A MOMENT, ALL STRUGGLING ENDS, AND THE COSTUMED STRANGER CALLED TIGER-MAN RISES FROM THE GROUND, TURNING HIS ATTENTION TO--
H-HEY... WAIT... LOOK, PLEASE...

THEY MENTIONED A PROFESSOR...
GIVE ME HIS NAME!
H-HE'D KILL ME--THE PROFESSOR WOULD--WOULD KILL ME!

MAKE UP YOUR MIND, PUNK! NOW!
AND I'LL KILL YOU IF YOU DON'T!

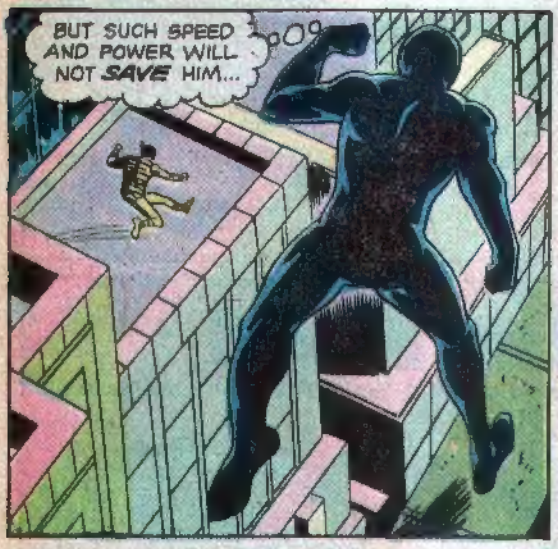
H-HIS NAME'S KOBART...PROFESSOR ANDERSON KOBART... TEACHES AT MANHATTAN UNIVERSITY...UPTOWN...
PLEASE...YOU WON'T KILL ME, WILL YOU?
PLEASE..?

THERE'S NO ANSWER--NO SOUND, OTHER THAN EDDIE'S RAGGED BREATHING.
SLOWLY, HE OPENS HIS EYES AND GAPES AT THE SIGHT BEFORE HIM...
THE STREET IS EMPTY. TIGER-MAN IS--GONE.

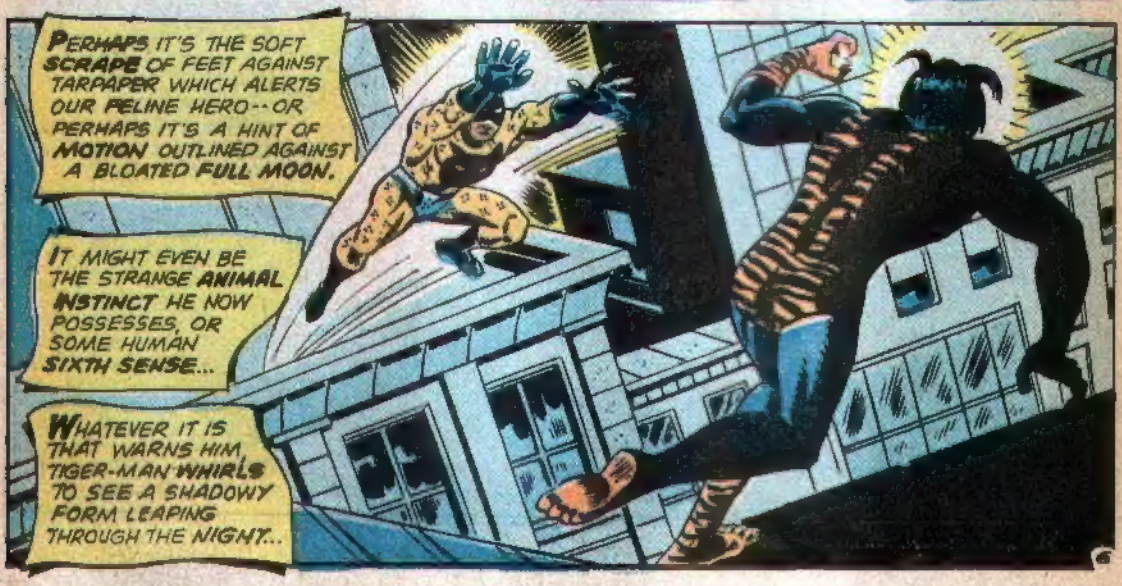

FOR A MOMENT, EDDIE SUMMERS DEBATES WHAT TO DO. SHOULD HE RUN OR GIVE HIMSELF UP?
A SIREN BLASTS IN THE DISTANCE, AND A POLICE CAR APPEARS DOWN THE STREET.
EDDIE SUMMERS MAKES UP HIS MIND, AND DOES THE ONLY THING POSSIBLE, WITH LITTLE GRACE BUT PERFECT TIMING--HE FAINTS.

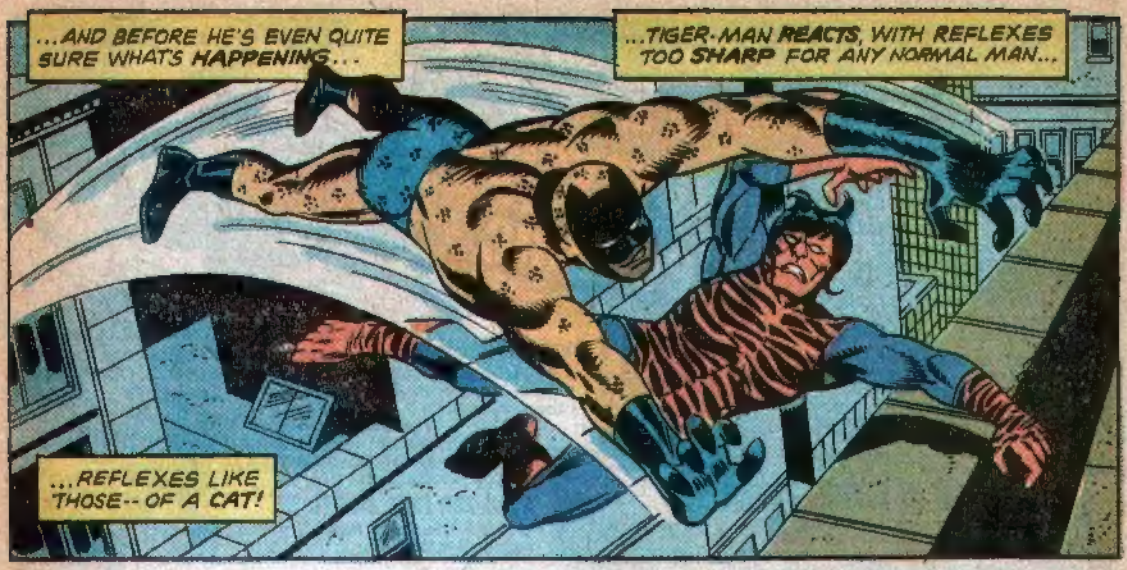
TIGER-MAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, MOVES IN A WAY ONLY TIGER-MAN CAN...

DID WE SAY "ONLY TIGER-MAN"?
MY PREY CLIMBS LIKE A GREAT CAT --WITH THE SPEED OF A COUGAR, AND THE STRENGTH OF A LION!


BUT SUCH SPEED AND POWER WILL NOT SAVE HIM...

...WHEN THE BLUE LEOPARD STRIKES!


PERHAPS IT'S THE SOFT SCRAPE OF FEET AGAINST TARPAPER WHICH ALERTS OUR FELINE HERO--OR PERHAPS IT'S A HINT OF MOTION OUTLINED AGAINST A BLOATED FULL MOON.
IT MIGHT EVEN BE THE STRANGE ANIMAL INSTINCT HE NOW POSSESSES, OR SOME HUMAN SIXTH SENSE...
WHATEVER IT IS THAT WARNS HIM, TIGER-MAN WHIRLS TO SEE A SHADOWY FORM LEAPING THROUGH THE NIGHT...


...AND BEFORE HE'S EVEN QUITE SURE WHAT'S HAPPENING...
...TIGER-MAN REACTS, WITH REFLEXES TOO SHARP FOR ANY NORMAL MAN...
...REFLEXES LIKE THOSE--OF A CAT!

UNBELIEVABLE! WHOEVER HE IS, THIS MAN IS ALMOST AS AGILE AS I AM!
WHAT DO I MEAN "ALMOST"?

THE WAY HE RECOVERED--LIKE A CAT REGAINING ITS BALANCE IN MID-AIR...
...AND THAT COSTUME HE'S WEARING--SOME SORT OF LEOPARD-SKIN--?
YOU APPEAR STARTLED, DR. HILL.
I CAN SEE YOU DIDN'T EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER A MAN OF MY ABILITIES...

...BUT YOU HAVE--AND NOW YOU MUST FIGHT ME, AND IF YOU CAN--SURVIVE!
SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE!
HE KNOWS MY NAME AND HIS POWERS ALMOST DUPLICATE MINE!

I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS CHARACTER--
BUT HOW DO I DO THAT...
...WITHOUT GETTING KILLED?

SNARLING, THE SELF-STYLED BLUE LEOPARD THROWS HIMSELF BACKWARD, HIS CLAWS SINKING DEEP INTO THE CLOTH COVERING TIGER-MAN'S CHEST...

...JERKING OUR HERO OFF-BALANCE...

...DRAGGING HIM FORWARD...

...AND OVER!

ANOTHER MAN WOULD BREAK HIS COLLAR-BONE IN A FALL LIKE THIS...

...BUT IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, TIGER-MAN ISN'T LIKE OTHER MEN.

HE'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

AND BECAUSE HE'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT-- HE LANDS WITHOUT A SCRATCH.

NA' BANTU WARNED ME YOU'D BE DIFFICULT TO KILL. I DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM THEN...

I ONLY HALF BELIEVE HIM NOW.

NA'BANTU? THEN-- YOU'RE FROM AFRICA! HOW-- UNHH!

INSTINCTIVELY, RESPONDING TO THE HOT PAIN WHICH LASHES HIS STOMACH AND CHEST, TIGER-MAN STRIKES OUT...

FIST SMASHES AGAINST FACE...THE BLUE LEOPARD REELS...

...AND RECOVERS!

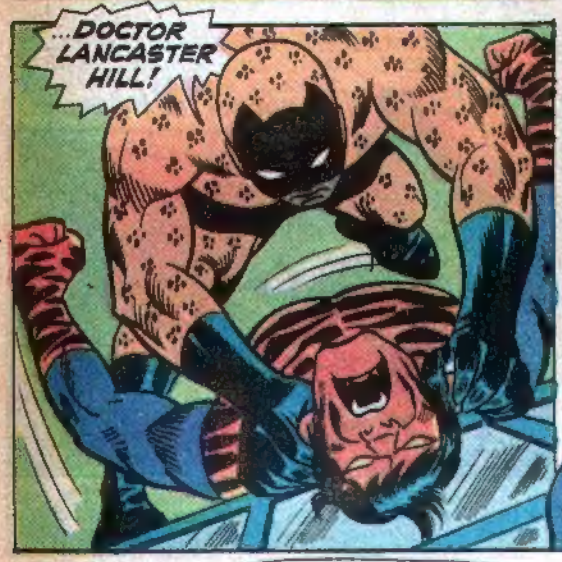
NA'BANTU SAID TO TAUNT YOU WITH THE TRUTH, DR. HILL-- TO PLAY WITH YOU, AS THE LEOPARD PLAYS WITH ITS VICTIM!

WHAMM!

VERY WELL...

... LISTEN TO ME, DR. LANCASTER HILL. LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF VENGEANCE!
FOR YOUR SINS AGAINST MY PEOPLE, YOU WILL DIE...
BUNT!
... BUT YOU WILL NOT DIE HERE, OR NOW.

YOU WILL DIE WHEN I DECIDE-- AND YOU WILL DIE PAINFULLY...
...AS PAINFULLY AS THE HUNDREDS OF MY PEOPLE DIED...
SO SHALL YOU DIE...


...DOCTOR LANCASTER HILL!

THOOM!

ALL RIGHT, FRIEND--IT'S MY TURN.
YOU'VE TALKED A GOOD LINE--BUT YOU STILL HAVE A LITTLE EXPLAINING TO DO!

...AND I THINK I'LL HELP YOU MAKE THOSE EXPLANATIONS...
BY PROVIDING SOME ENCOURAGEMENT!
BOMP!

HIS BREATH COMES IN SHORT, RAGGED GASPS AND HIS LUNGS SEEMS ALMOST ON FIRE. TIGER-MAN STAGGERS AS HE REGAINS HIS FEET...

...AND WONDERS WHY, SO SUDDENLY, HE FEELS WEAK...

...WEAKER THAN HE'S EVER FELT BEFORE!

DRUGGED..? YOUR CLAWS... A DRUG ON YOUR CLAWS?

THAT'S RIGHT, DR. HILL-- OR AS YOU CALL YOURSELF NOW-- TIGER-MAN.

NA'BANTU PREPARED A POTION FOR MY CLAWS. THIS TIME IT ACTS MERELY TO PUT YOU TO SLEEP.

NEXT TIME, THE AMOUNT WILL BE INCREASED..

...AND IT WILL KILL YOU!

THE LEOPARD'S VOICE ECHOES ODDLY, LIKE A SOUND HEARD THROUGH WATER OR A VOICE SPEAKING IN THE DISTANCE.

TIGER-MAN FEELS A STRANGE WARMTH FLOODING THROUGH HIM THROUGH HIS STOMACH, THROUGH HIS NECK AND INTO HIS FACE.

IT'S ALMOST A PLEASANT SENSATION ... WHILE IT LASTS.

ABRUPTLY, HE FEELS NOTHING.

HE DROPS DOWN, INTO THE DARKNESS...

...AND IN THE DARKNESS, HE DREAMS...

IT IS A BIZARRE DREAM, FILLED WITH CONFLICTING IMAGES... AN AFRICAN GAME RESERVE.. AN INDIAN TIGER RUNNING WILD..

AND A MAN DR. LANCASTER HILL, A DEDICATED YOUNG DOCTOR WITH THE PEACE CORPS, WORKING IN AFRICAN ZAMBIA TO HELP IN HIS OWN WAY--TO RELIEVE THE TROUBLES OF THE PEOPLE.
HIS INTEREST IN ANIMAL INSTINCTS LED HIM TO EXPERIMENT WITH A TIGER SHIPPED TO THE MEDICAL CENTER FROM NOVA. HE WASN'T SURE WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR.
.. BUT HE KNEW WHEN HE D FOUND IT. RATHER THAN RISK ANOTHER MAN'S LIFE, HE USED HIMSELF AS A GUINEA PIG FOR THE SERUM HE D ISOLATED.
WHEN A JEALOUS WITCH DOCTOR RELEASED THE TIGER, HOPING TO BLAME DR. HILL FOR ANY DEATHS CAUSED BY THE BEAST'S RAMPAGE...
...DR. HILL FOUND HIMSELF BATTLING THE GIANT CAT.
..AND, TRANSFORMED BY THE SERUM HE'D TAKEN, BEATING THE TIGER IN A STRUGGLE TO THE DEATH!
HOW MUCH LIKE A DREAM IT ALL SEEMS, LIKE A NIGHTMARE--NOT REALITY. BUT IT IS REALITY--DARK REALITY--AND THOUGH IT COMES BACK TO HIM NOW AS A DREAM...

LOOK UP NEW YORK .. HERE'S A SIGHT THAT DOESN'T COME ALONG EVERY DAY.

AFTER ALL, HOW MANY TIGER-MEN ARE THERE IN A CITY OF NINE MILLION PEOPLE?

JUST ONE!

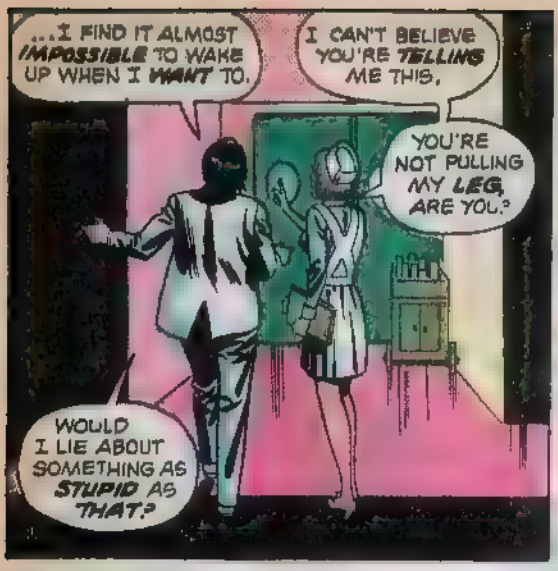
HARLEM
HOSPITAL

HARL

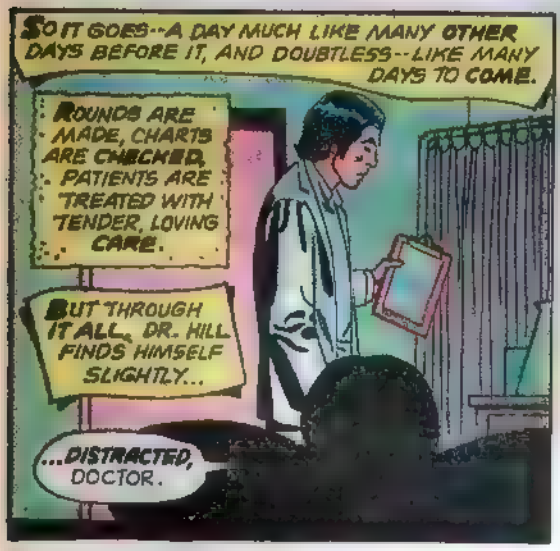
LAN! THERE YOU ARE!

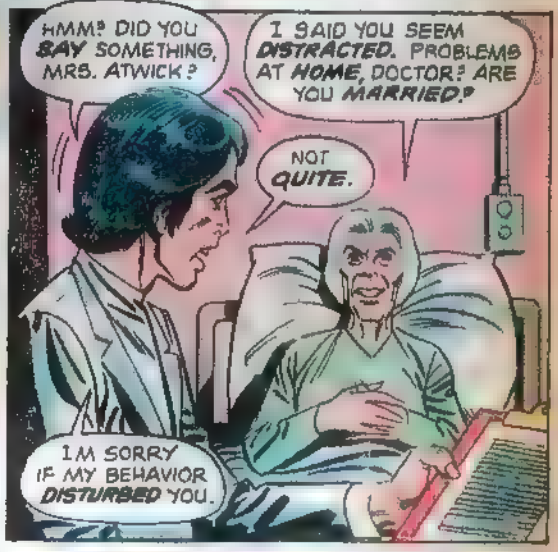
OH, HELLO. I DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE SHARING THIS SHIFT TODAY
WE WOULDN'T BE IF CAROL ROPER HADN'T CALLED IN SICK.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, LAN? DR. McCAULEY HAS BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU!
I WAS AFRAID OF THAT.

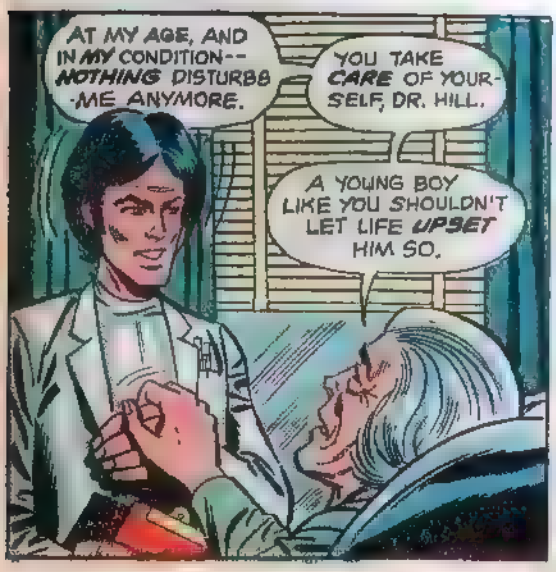
FRANKLY--AH-- I'VE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING LATELY.
SLEEPING..? ARE YOU SERIOUS?
IT'S NOT A JOKE... I CAN'T GET TO SLEEP-- AND WHEN I FINALLY DO...


...I FIND IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO WAKE UP WHEN I WANT TO.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE TELLING ME THIS.
YOU'RE NOT PULLING MY LEG, ARE YOU?
WOULD I LIE ABOUT SOMETHING AS STUPID AS THAT?

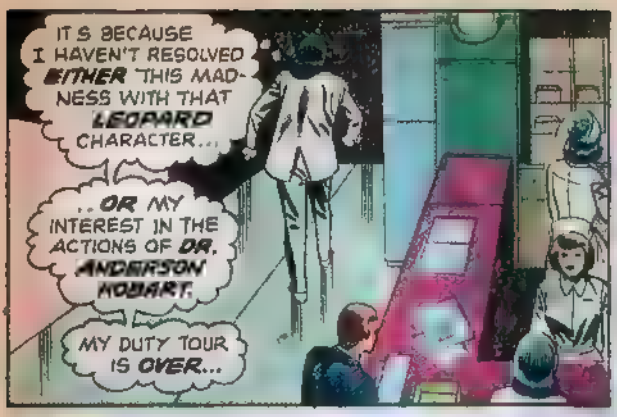
WELL..
DON'T ANSWER.


SO IT GOES--A DAY MUCH LIKE MANY OTHER DAYS BEFORE IT, AND DOUBTLESS--LIKE MANY DAYS TO COME.
ROUNDS ARE MADE, CHARTS ARE CHECKED, PATIENTS ARE TREATED WITH TENDER, LOVING CARE.
BUT THROUGH IT ALL, DR. HILL FINDS HIMSELF SLIGHTLY...
...DISTRACTED, DOCTOR.


HMM? DID YOU SAY SOMETHING, MRS. ATWICK?
I SAID YOU SEEM DISTRACTED. PROBLEMS AT HOME, DOCTOR? ARE YOU MARRIED?
NOT QUITE.
I'M SORRY IF MY BEHAVIOR DISTURBED YOU.

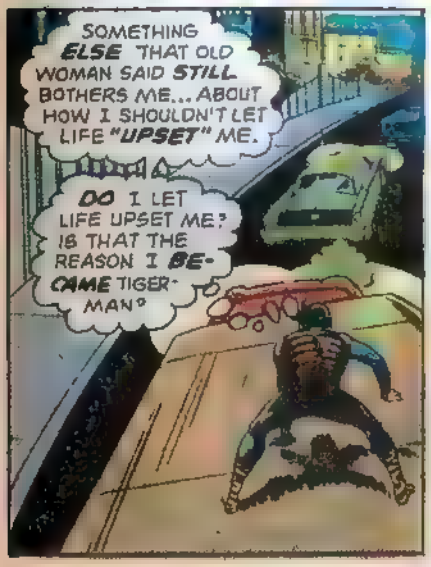

AT MY AGE, AND IN MY CONDITION--NOTHING DISTURBS ME ANYMORE.
YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, DR. HILL.
A YOUNG BOY LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T LET LIFE UPSET HIM SO.

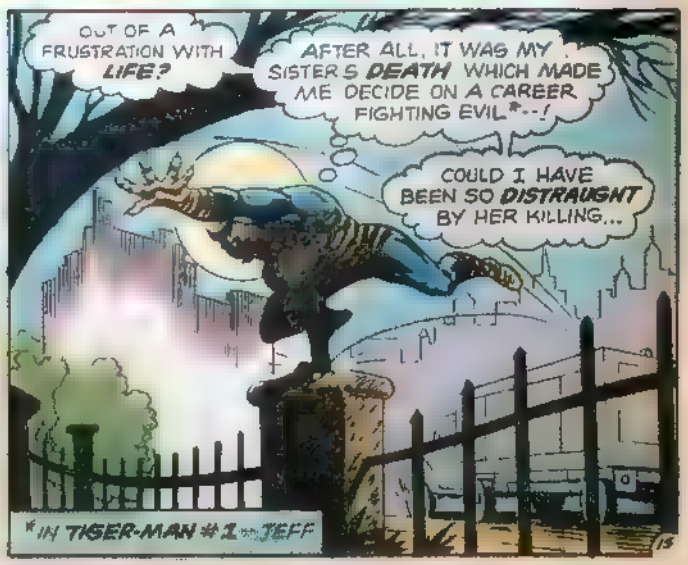
A SMILE OF THANKS, A MURMURED "GOOD EVENING," AND...
SHE'S RIGHT I HAVE BEEN WALKING THROUGH TODAY IN A FOG. AND I KNOW WHY.



SOON, A LITHE FIGURE MOVES UNSEEN ALONG THE SHADOWED ROOFTOPS OF UPPER BROADWAY, DARTING SUDDENLY FROM ROOFTOP TO TRUCKTOP...

...HITCHING A RIDE IN A MOST PECULIAR WAY!

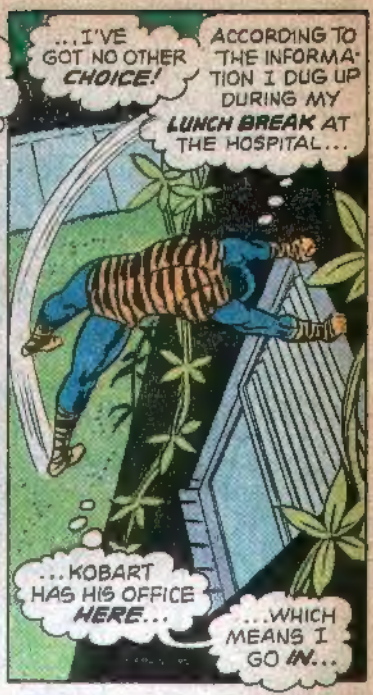




*IN TIGER-MAN #1 — JEFF

...THAT I'VE BEEN FIGHTING REALITY-- BY AVENGING HER, AGAIN AND AGAIN?
HELL, I DON'T KNOW. MY SPECIALTY IS IN PHYSICAL MEDICINE...
...NOT PSYCHIATRY.

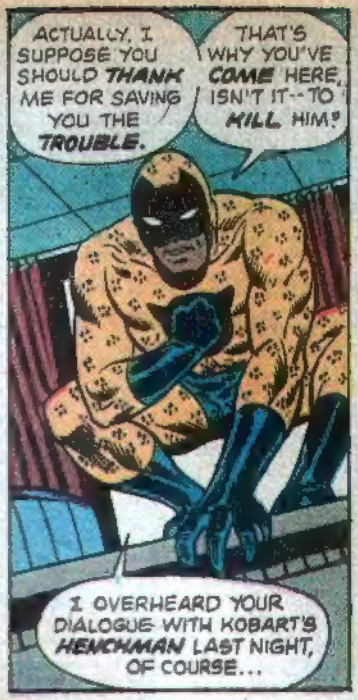
WHICH RAISES ANOTHER QUESTION ...IF I'M A MAN OF MEDICINE--A HEALER...
...WHAT ON EARTH AM I DOING KILLING PEOPLE?
AGAIN-- I JUST DON'T KNOW! ALL I DO KNOW IS...


...I'VE GOT NO OTHER CHOICE!
ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION I DUG UP DURING MY LUNCH BREAK AT THE HOSPITAL...
...KOBART HAS HIS OFFICE HERE...
...WHICH MEANS I GO IN...

...THE HARD WAY!
SKRRASH!

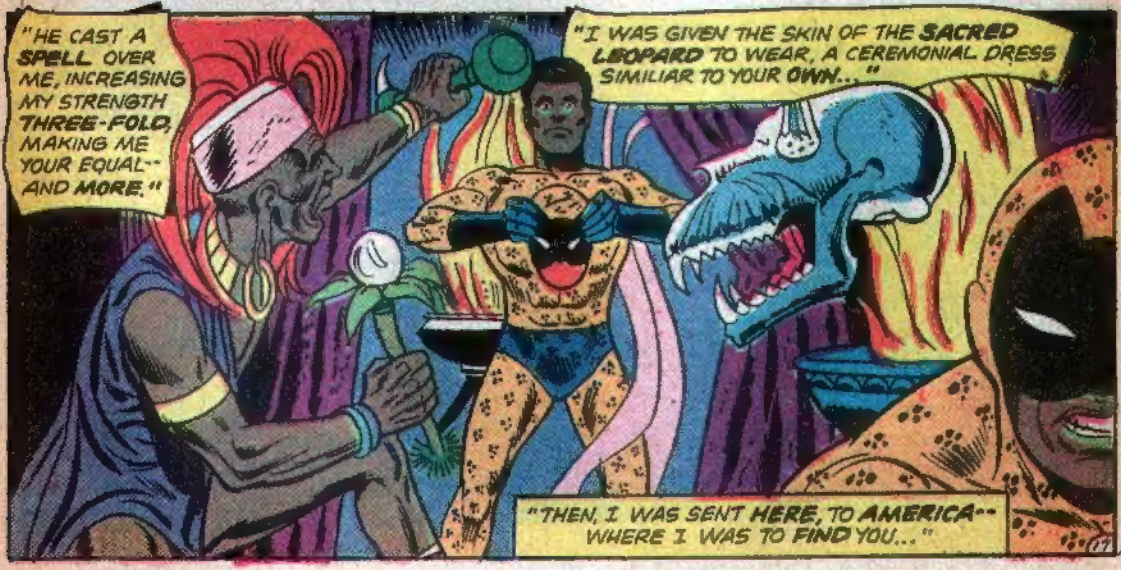
WHAT?
PROFESSOR KOBART--DEAD!
VERY DEAD, DR. HILL...

.. WITH ALL THE EVIDENCE POINTING DIRECTLY TO YOU, TIGER-MAN!
TIGER-MAN DOESN'T SPEAK BUT THE HATE GLARING IN HIS EYES SAYS VOLUMES...

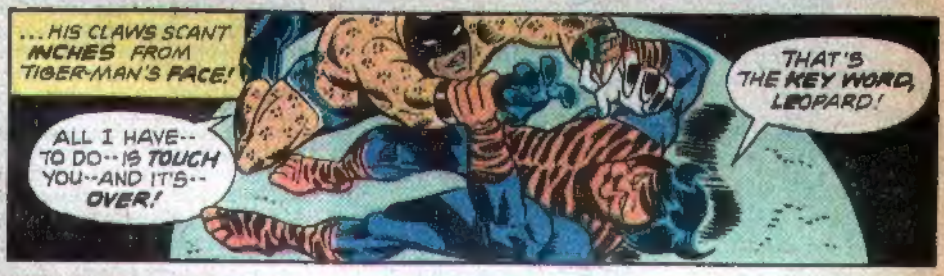

ACTUALLY, I SUPPOSE YOU SHOULD THANK ME FOR SAVING YOU THE TROUBLE.
THAT'S WHY YOU'VE COME HERE, ISN'T IT--TO KILL HIM?
I OVERHEARD YOUR DIALOGUE WITH KOBART'S HENCHMAN LAST NIGHT, OF COURSE...

...WHICH IS WHY I THOUGHT TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THIS SMALL PRESENT--
SOMETHING WITH WHICH TO COMPLI-CATE YOUR FURTIVE LITTLE LIFE.
YOU HAVE TEN SECONDS, LEOPARD. TEN SECONDS TO EXPLAIN-- BEFORE I KILL YOU.

"THE EXPLANATION IS SIMPLE ENOUGH, DR. HILL. I AM HERE TO CLAIM VENGEANCE. NA'BANTU, WITCH DOCTOR OF OUR VILLAGE IN ZAMBIA, SENT ME TO EXACT RETRIBUTION FOR THE DEATHS YOUR SORCERY CAUSED..."
"...THE DEATHS, BY STARVATION, OF OVER TWO HUNDRED OF MY TRIBE--WHICH BEGAN ONLY A MONTH AFTER YOU LEFT OUR COUNTRY..."
"NA'BANTU SAID YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE...YOU AND YOUR WHITE WITCHERY."


"HE CAST A SPELL OVER ME, INCREASING MY STRENGTH THREE-FOLD, MAKING ME YOUR EQUAL--AND MORE."
"I WAS GIVEN THE SKIN OF THE SACRED LEOPARD TO WEAR, A CEREMONIAL DRESS SIMILIAR TO YOUR OWN..."
"THEN, I WAS SENT HERE, TO AMERICA-- WHERE I WAS TO FIND YOU..."

SLITHERING MORE LIKE A SNAKE THAN A CAT, THE BLUE LEOPARD TWISTS--SWINGS HIMSELF AROUND-- AND LANDS ON TOP OF TIGER-MAN...



I'LL LEAVE YOU TO THE **POLICE**, DR. HILL--FOR **NOW**. YOU CAN STAY AND ATTEMPT AN **EXPLANATION** FOR KOBART'S DEATH...

OR, YOU CAN **RUN**, AND MAKE YOURSELF A **FUGITIVE**.

HOLD IT! YOU AREN'T GOING **ANYWHERE** MISTER!

AREN'T I?

TONIGHT WAS JUST A **DRY RUN**, DR. HILL. THERE ARE THINGS YOU STILL HAVE TO **LEARN** ABOUT ME...

AND LEARN THEM, YOU **WILL**...

...BEFORE YOU **DIE!**

ODDLY ACCENTED LAUGHTER DRIFTS UP FROM THE DARKENED CAMPUS, REACHING TO THE DEPTHS OF TIGER-MAN'S SOUL...

...WHERE **NEW** FORCES ARE FUSING, UNKNOWN TO LANNIE HILL--AND FOR THE MOMENT, **UNHEEDED**...

THE LEOPARD **KILLED** KOBART--JUST TO **ANNOY** ME. A MAN DIED--TO SUIT **ANOTHER** MAN'S **WHIM**.

MY GOD. **I** WAS GOING TO KILL KOBART MYSELF. AND IF I HAD --WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD THERE HAVE BEEN BETWEEN THE LEOPARD AND **ME?**

IN THE NAME OF **HEAVEN**... WHERE DOES THE HERO **END**, AND THE **MADMAN** ...**BEGIN?**

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION, TIGER-MAN... A SURE INDICATION THAT DESPITE APPEARANCES--THIS IS ANYTHING **BUT-- THE END!**